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Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission

Environmental Scan Research Report

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Background & Objectives

Most organizations have some form of feedback loop by which they can assess their performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and thereby strive to continuously improve. Commercial businesses most obviously have financial measures to evaluate success; membership organizations have membership levels, and those in the political arena have the electorate. However, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) has none of these feedback loops by which to assess performance. The Commission deals with a number of different publics – most notably the individual utilities, rate payers and representatives thereof. But curiously, in their role as a regulator, in many ways the type of evaluations they would anecdotally obtain from these publics are most likely to be negative ones. The fact is they are essentially adversaries in important respects – and as such not a likely source of casual, helpful, directive feedback.

In light of these considerations, it was determined that a structured market research effort designed and conducted by an outside objective research organization could serve to address the feedback void. With the absence of any prior research effort, the design of this program was somewhat exploratory in nature and commenced with the following informational objectives:

- Evaluate the current *touch points* of the Commission with all stakeholder groups and explore the process, quality and effectiveness of these interactions.
- Explore in each stakeholder group beyond the key contact personnel to those influenced by and desirous of the Commissions actions. With this group the impact of the process upon their functionality needs to be explored.
- Review the flow of information, in addition to interactions, and its efficiency and appropriateness.
- Assess the performance of the Commission in terms of professionalism, knowledge, timeliness, inclusive of quality and the sufficiency of the physical facilities from the perspective of all involved stakeholders.
- Identify specific areas of weakness and opportunities for the IURC to improve its performance in order to better serve its various stakeholders.
- Provide detailed conclusions and recommendations regarding strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that could serve as the starting point for the development of a Strategic Plan which would improve the organization and the quality of service it provides going forward.

Methodology

Several considerations went into the methodological design of this research effort. First of all, without any past research programs or models to follow, much of the effort needed to be exploratory in nature. Secondly, given a limited population, every effort should be made to include all interested parties into the surveying. Third, whatever phases of research were executed, client confidentiality needed to be a critical ingredient to help assure candid responses, criticism and direction. These considerations were at the core of the research design which consisted of the following phases:

Strategic Review In order to help develop details of the surveys and interactions with the publics of interest, it was imperative that SMARI have a solid working understanding of the Commission, its role, responsibilities, procedures, limitations and manner of functioning. In order to do so, on several occasions qualitative discussions with the IURC management and staff were held to obtain this working knowledge, address issues and concerns and generally become reasonably well schooled in the Commission's operations and issues.

Initial Qualitative Executive Interviews In order to help ferret out the issues and concerns of the different stakeholders and publics, qualitative executive interviews were conducted with nearly 20 respondents representing a wide array of industries, utilities both large and small, intervenors and rate payer representatives. These took place as an information discussion of issues. A copy of the interviewer's outline can be found in the appendix. On average, these discussions lasted approximately 20 minutes with some extending to an hour's duration. The goal of the interviews was to explore a wealth of topics, uncover critical issues and terminology, and develop preliminary hypotheses of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

On-line Group Discussions While one-on-one interviews are an excellent forum for qualitative evaluation, sometimes the dynamics of group discussions help to elicit additional issues and topics as a result of their interactive format. Given the diverse locale of many potential respondents and the ubiquitousness of email and desktop web access for business people, on-line group discussions are just as valuable yet more convenient. To get this interactive input a series of three on-line group sessions was held – one with large utilities, one with smaller utilities and a third with non-utility organizations. A total of 30 individuals participated in these group discussions.

Quantitative Assessment After this thorough qualitative assessment, a survey instrument was developed to quantify the extent of agreement and disagreement with many of the identified issues. A copy of the questionnaire employed is attached. The survey was sent via email to the entire identified population of those with whom the IURC interacts. A total of approximately 150 discrete individuals were identified at the outset of this project. A total of 48 of these respondents completed this quantitative phase.

Special Segments Finally, after the completion of the other phases and a preliminary review of these findings, critical utility, legislative and other higher profile respondents were asked to participate in a final executive interview where some of the initial findings were shared. A total of 11 of these interviews were conducted.

At the conclusion of the data collection portion of this research, the following analysis of the key findings was prepared along with conclusions and recommendations for the Commission to improve its performance and value to the state.

Summary of Findings

The scope of this research effort was large by any measure. From the outset, since the potentially relevant issues were not even well defined, there were truly no topical limits to the study. With the goal being to assess how well the Commission is doing and identify strengths and weaknesses and result in actionable recommendations, every aspect of the Commission and its function, as well as every public it touches, was part of the focus.

In light of the breadth of this investigation, sorting out the results, organizing them and presenting them in a coherent fashion presents another challenge. In what follows, the review will generally be topical with the discussion drawing from all phases of the research rather than each one discussed individually. The result is hopefully a more cohesive, meaningful report document.

Overall Evaluations

The notion of an overall *performance* evaluation of the Utility Regulatory Commission is an unusual concept at first. Minimally, what is one evaluating? Simplistically, it is whether or not the IURC is doing a good job. And the job being evaluated is from the perspective of the respondent.

From a qualitative perspective, most of the comments were generally positive. While people had issues and concerns they seemed to provide overall approval – although more often than not with a caveat.

I don't have any problems with the job that the Commission does.

I have no problems with the Commission or its Staff. I have a positive attitude.

Overall, pretty good with a generally realistic understanding of utility and consumer issues.

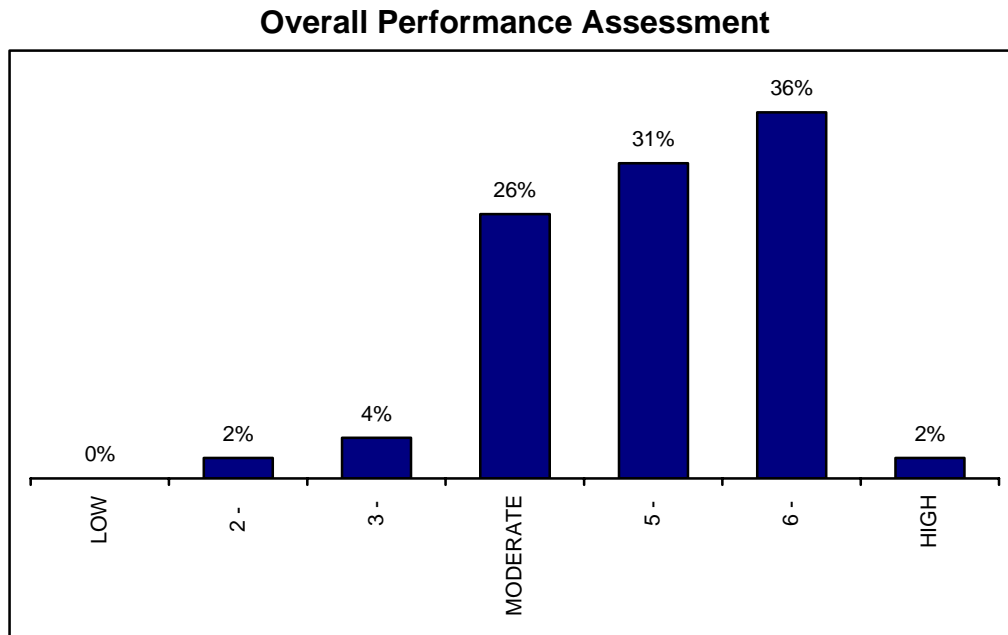
Our assessment of the Commission is positive.

The Commission is diligent and hardworking and its personnel are experienced and generally helpful. Overall, the level of professionalism is good.

I feel that from an overall perspective the Commission does an excellent job. They are interested, engaged and are diligent in their pursuit of learning about/anticipating industry trends. Staff is exceptional in terms of knowledge, expertise and willingness to listen.

For the most part, job disapproval was the exception – but so were comments like the last one above. It was because of this that the quantitative phase of this research was conducted. And in this less anecdotal regard, the findings revealed a positive perspective, but by no means a glowing performance endorsement. Respondents were asked to rate

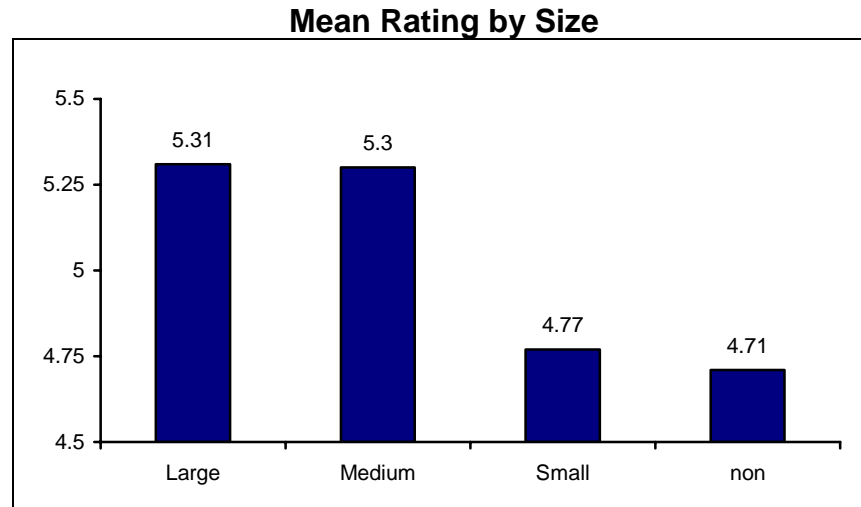
the Commission overall using a 7-point scale. Overall on this scale the average rating was a 5.02. The distribution of these ratings is illustrated below.



This overall performance is acceptable, but by no means excellent. Typically, on a 7-point scale, scores of around 5.0 (or roughly 70%) are considered acceptable and 5.5 (or nearly 80% of the total possible) are considered excellent. While this result is certainly acceptable, it seems to include some degree of qualification. It's like "they are doing a good job, but..." Some of this could certainly be a function of the nature of the evaluation – it could be something that is hard to rate very positively. Additionally, it could also be a function of the respondents and their perspective. In a certain interesting sense, if those being regulated rate their regulator as excellent, is the regulator really doing its job?

On a positive note, while this rating is not extraordinary the fact is that it would appear to be improving. Respondents were asked to compare the performance of the Commission over the last several years to prior to that time and a total of 46% stated recent years have been better as compared to a mere 16% indicating it was worse. As a result, while the rating is merely acceptable, it appears to be improving (in the absence of any tracking research, this sort of self-evaluation over time is the only trending resource available).

Interestingly, this overall assessment exhibited few differences by level of experience, type of relationship, length of experiences and the like; there was a remarkably strong relationship between the overall review and the size of the utility. Specifically, the larger the utility, the more positive the relationship. The table below considers this finding in terms of mean ratings.



As will be seen in much of the discussion that follows, this result should perhaps not be viewed as too much of a surprise. In the simplest perspective, the fact of the matter is that larger utilities have more interaction and communication with the Commission. This yields both comfort and familiarity. Among the smaller utilities, on the other hand, the interactions are far fewer and hence less comfortable. These smaller regulated companies have neither the resources nor experience to interact as effectively.

The reason for this strong correlation will become evident as we consider the primary contributors to these evaluations. But the relationship between size and attitude is quite strong – coupled with a perception of bias toward the larger utilities on the Commission’s behalf. In fact, based on these three statements:

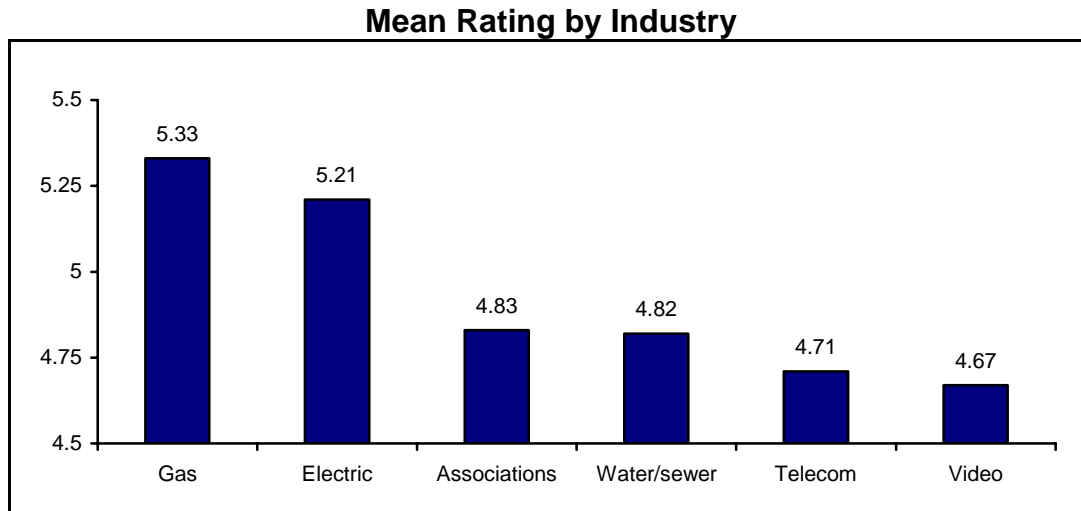
The Commission isn’t sensitive enough to the challenges of smaller utilities

The Commission has a bias toward larger utilities

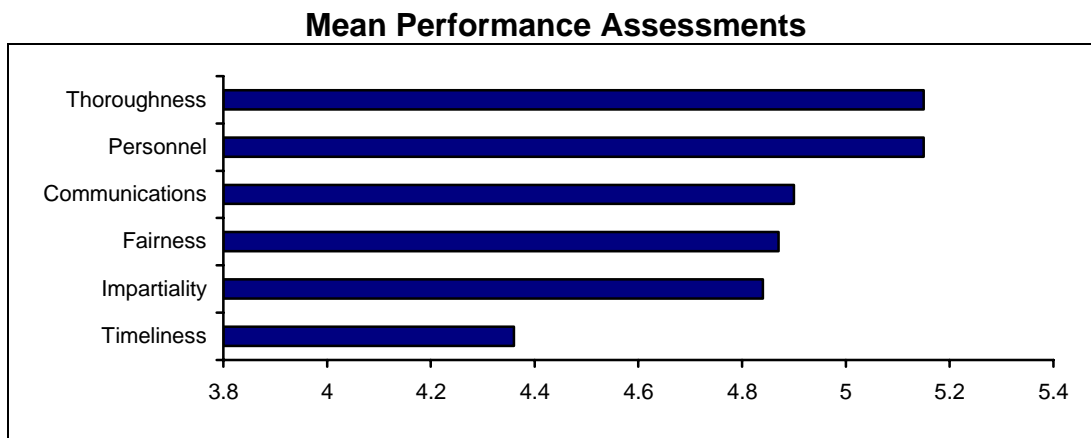
The biggest problem with delays in obtaining rate increases is the costs incurred by utilities

The class of utility or non-utility can be predicted with 64% accuracy (a rate which is typically quite high with attitudinal data). These are of course directly related to their size, but unquestionably, it is a perception issue.

In addition to size, there is a variation in the reaction by industry that is not surprising. Since the role of the Commission with respect to telecom has dramatically lessened recently, their resultant interactions have as well. This, along with less clarity about their role, drives their overall assessment downwards. The gas and electric utilities, which are, of course, generally the larger ones with the highest level of interaction, rate the IURC most positively. Interestingly, however, this pattern of rating is not reflected in the industry assessment of recency – the electric utilities as a group feel the Commission performance has been worse in recent years while deregulated video and telecom are more likely to feel performance has improved. Assessments of how this performance has changes also vary by the size of the utility and likely frequency of interaction. Large utilities report less change as a group which smaller ones report more improvement.



Broadly speaking, there are but a handful of recurrent themes which were uncovered in this research. This is despite the fact that innumerable topics and issues were addressed in a multiplicity of forums and approaches. At the highest level, respondents were asked to rate the Commission on six global attributes. These results illustrate the most oft-mentioned area of weakness which was *timeliness*. Interestingly, there is not a tremendous amount of variability in these ratings. But the weakness of *timeliness* is balanced by the relative strength of *thoroughness* – albeit falling below the 5.5 target of excellence.



This chart makes clear the most pervasive perception of *timeliness* as a weakness. The lower ratings for *fairness* and *impartiality* could be viewed as somewhat of a concern – and unquestionably fairness is a critical issue. But in many respects, this is just a reflection of the satisfaction with the last case. And as we noted earlier, these ratings all seem to vary directly with the size of the utility with the biggest variance on the question of *impartiality*. This is shown in the table which follows by *indexing* the ratings of each size segment against the overall average. An index of 100 represents the average while 105 would be 5% higher and 95 would be 5% lower. As already seen, the smallest organizations feel the Commission is biased toward larger utilities.

Attribute Ratings/Size Indices

	Large	Medium	Small
Timeliness	107	92	97
Communications	110	93	95
Personnel	105	101	95
Thoroughness	111	93	95
Fairness	108	103	95
Impartiality	111	107	94

While these broad topical attributes provide a generalized context of understanding, the fact of the matter is that the issues are many and subtle. Because of this, one of the purposes of the quantitative wave was to provide an objective measure of some of the key issues that were revealed in the initial qualitative waves. To do so, a list of 21 different statements describing the IURC was developed and respondents were asked to assess their level of agreement with each, again using a 5-point rating scale. These statements are listed below in rank order of their correlation with the overall assessment – as a surrogate for how important each is in terms of driving overall performance appraisals of the Commission. As can be seen, ratings of *fairness* are highly correlated with the overall performance evaluation suggesting that this is a key element of the evaluation. Conversely assessments of staff turnover by individual respondents have no relationship with their overall rating.

Descriptive Statements Inferred Importance

I think the Commission does its best to be fair to all parties involved in its cases	76%
The Commission does a good job of understanding complex regulatory policy issues	64%
The Commission is open to new ideas	55%
Commissioners are more accessible than they used to be	49%
The Commission does a good job handling customer complaints	39%
The Commission has a bias toward larger utilities	33%
The Commission isn't sensitive enough to the challenges of smaller utilities	32%
Many rulings take too long	27%
The IURC needs to better understand new technologies and their impact	26%
Orders need to be made in a timelier basis	21%
The Commission should provide clear guidelines to facilitate cases and settlements	11%
The problem with the length of cases is that it costs more money	11%
The most significant weakness of the Commission is a lack of ethnic diversity	10%
There may be too few staff members to handle all the work of the Commission	8%
The biggest problem with delays in obtaining rate increases is the costs incurred by utilities	6%
Cases settled with the OUCC should be processed with an order in 2-4 weeks	3%
Delays in docketed cases are most often caused by parties other than the Commission	2%
Consumers should have a better understanding of how rates are regulated by the Commission	2%
More female representation is needed on the Commission	2%
Regulatory lag is the biggest weakness of the Commission	1%
There is a high level of staff turnover	0%

A quick review of this list of attributes reveals that those which are most strongly correlated center upon overall assessments of fairness and openness. The second tier of correlations concerns the perceived bias toward larger utilities. The next set of attributes is more specific and mostly related to the pervasive timeliness issue. And lastly, there are very specific considerations which, regardless of the level of agreement or disagreement, are clearly not central evaluative performance concerns. Generally speaking, the relationship of these attributes to overall performance assessments could probably have been anticipated. More importantly, perhaps, is the level of agreement each of these statements receives.

Unfortunately, the mere iteration of these scores in a list is not necessarily the most helpful way to review these types of attribute ratings. As a result, *factor analysis* is quite often used to identify groups of descriptors which are highly related. Efforts to use this approach on these data proved to be unfruitful revealing little in the way of underlying dimensions. For this reason, these overall ratings are summarized below in rank order of the respondent agreement levels.

Descriptive Statements Ratings

Cases settled with the OUCC should be processed with an order in 2-4 weeks	5.20
Many rulings take too long	5.16
The Commission does a good job of understanding complex regulatory policy issues	5.16
The Commission should provide clear guidelines to facilitate cases and settlements	5.14
I think the Commission does its best to be fair to all parties involved in its cases	5.14
Orders need to be made in a timelier basis	5.10
The Commission does a good job handling customer complaints	4.96
The IURC needs to better understand new technologies and their impact	4.94
The problem with the length of cases is that it costs more money	4.94
Consumers should have a better understanding of how rates are regulated by the Commission	4.80
Regulatory lag is the biggest weakness of the Commission	4.67
The Commission is open to new ideas	4.65
The biggest problem with delays in obtaining rate increases is the costs incurred by utilities	4.59
Delays in docketed cases are most often caused by parties other than the Commission	4.43
Commissioners are more accessible than they used to be	4.33
The Commission isn't sensitive enough to the challenges of smaller utilities	4.31
There is a high level of staff turnover	4.18
There may be too few staff members to handle all the work of the Commission	4.02
More female representation is needed on the Commission	3.98
The Commission has a bias toward larger utilities	3.88
The most significant weakness of the Commission is a lack of ethnic diversity	3.06

Here again we see some growingly familiar themes. Among the top rated statements are those which center upon both fairness and timeliness. The next group of statements reveals disagreement and indifference on the part of those participating, and the third set

of descriptors again relates to some operationally specific comments. We will consider these in some depth later in the discussion – however, this provides a general overview.

It is nonetheless interesting to note that given the strong correlation of some of these variables with the overall performance assessment of the Commission, a small set of data points can be excellent predictors of individual responses. Specifically, based on the following four attributes, the overall rating can be predicted with 67% accuracy.

- Many rulings take too long
- I think the Commission does its best to be fair to all parties involved in its cases
- The Commission does a good job of understanding complex regulatory policy issues
- Commissioners are more accessible than they used to be

In part these attributes help to identify the handful of core issues which can be used to define the topics of the Commission's.

Timing

The fact of the matter is that no single issue aside from timing was more universally discussed regardless of segment, size, industry or experience. This is not to say that it is the most important issue in terms of excellent performance. Rather, it is simply the most pervasive. This was the top of mind comment almost regardless of setting or respondents. Consider some of the general timing comments that have been made.

“...the Commission takes to long too generate a decision and the cost to see a rate case is too high.”

“Regulatory lag continues to be a bit of a problem.”

“I believe some rate cases take too much time.”

“Timeliness is not good at the IURC. Most processes are very slow.”

“Rate filing process seems to take too long. Utilities lose flexibility, momentum, and can experience financial hardship if not timed properly.”

The timing problem appears to manifest itself in a variety of different ways which may require different consideration. These consist of two primary categories – generalized observations about the timing of decisions with rate cases, and most significantly the timing of rulings concerning settlement agreements. The feelings about each of these, the problems they create and the strength of the reactions vary somewhat widely.

The challenges with rate cases are many-fold. They begin with the fact that these are so often complicated and require detailed consideration of complex issues by a number of parties. The fact is that most of those participating in this research recognize this reality. The regulatory process is by its very nature a slow, painful process. And, it is oftentimes

one that is exacerbated by all parties involved. The filings themselves consist of oppressive detail which is then multiplied exponentially by all parties involved. The Commission itself was sometimes seen as having a bit too academic an approach to the issues.

“The regulatory process is inherently slow.”

“Very thorough -- in fact, too thorough for my tastes.”

But while most everyone agreed with timing being a problem, it was not one for which an easy solution could be found. When challenged, very few of those with whom the timing issue was discussed forward much more than a suggestion that timing become a priority of the Commission. Generally, however, the feeling was that a time limit of 9-10 months should be established and adhered to. Consider some of the comments in this regard:

“The Commission rules generally provide for issuance of rate case decisions within 90 days of receiving the parties' post-hearing filings. If this rule was adhered to all the time I doubt people would complain. As long as the Commission makes timeliness a known priority to its people, then I am not sure more can be done.”

“The Commission should follow the very reasonable 10 month deadline for orders in its own Minimum Standard Filing Requirements Rule, a deadline which the Commission has proposed to eliminate.”

“The parties and the Commission should be required to complete a rate case (i.e. issue a final order) within nine months of the filing of the case in chief. Procedural schedules should be required to fit within this timeframe and rates should go into effect if an order is not timely issued, absent extenuating circumstances.”

“9 to 10 months; undertake whatever is necessary internally to speed the process.”

“When it comes to rate cases, procedural timelines need to be addressed in order to shorten the time between when a case is filed and when an order is issued.”

“While much of the time taken from petition to order can be attributed to the parties, the Commission could impose more discipline on the process and on its responsibility to issue timely orders.”

The fact of the matter is that most of those surveyed found fault with the timing of the existing paradigm but were simultaneously unwilling to suggest or even accept significant change. Some ideas were forwarded for consideration:

- Increasing staff
- *Rocket Docket* having utilities pay for expedited service
- Limit rate regulation through increased use of *trackers*
- Use greater rigor from the bench to disallow delays
- Impose a statutory time limit or allow for rate implementation and revenue subject to refund prior to rate approval
- Different programs for larger versus smaller utilities
- Develop a *process map* and evaluate how to speed the process

None of the concepts was particularly well embraced. Clearly there is some comfort with the status quo. In fact, as one respondent noted, *“We should be careful about changing a*

pretty well functioning organization.” In fairness, the concept of an increased staff was generally felt to be outside of most respondents’ purview or understanding – and the staff issue will be discussed shortly. The idea of expedited cases obviously violates a fairness tenant. However, the issue of distinguishing between large and small utilities does require some consideration.

The perception that the Commission is biased toward large utilities has already been noted – and in part this is a function of how rate cases proceed. The fact of the matter is that larger utilities are more equipped to handle all the administration involved in a case – from staff lawyers and departments to even internal resources. For very small utilities the demands of a case may all fall upon one person. This certainly strains resources. As does delays in timing. The longer a case drags out, the more it costs the utility. And while this cost may be recaptured as part of the case, so doing just passes these additional costs to the rate payers. In light of these considerations, it is reasonable to think that size matters – and perhaps some of the staff can be dedicated to handle the cases of smaller organizations. This bureaucracy may be what has driven some municipals to *opt out* because of their strapped resources. This issue would seem to warrant further consideration. It was reported that there is a tiered process in place for rate cases for small utilities – however, much like the IRS short form, a utility can quickly be disqualified making it of limited use.

However, beyond this, timing is a problem which clearly should be addressed and may require more than just making it a priority. Rather, steps to realize timing efficiencies should be aggressively pursued.

While timing overall was nearly universally discussed and recognized as a weakness, the timing of rulings on settlements was an issue which those who participated found hard to comprehend.

“If the case is settled, I see no reason why it should take longer than 2-3 weeks to rule.”

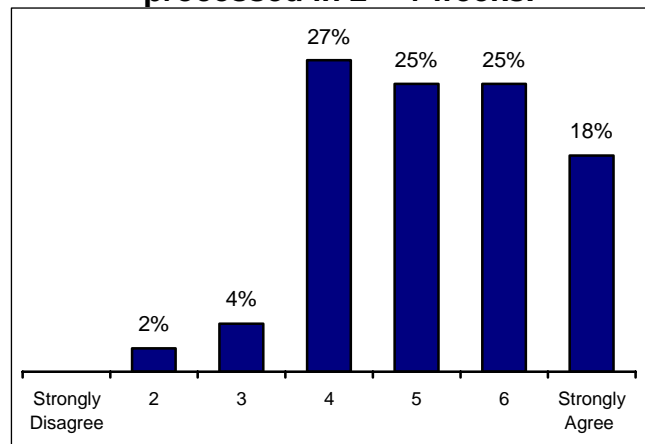
“90 days is too long to receive an order in a settled case.”

“Cases settled with the OUCC should be processed to an order within 2-4 weeks.”

In fact, in the quantitative phase the statement regarding the amount of time to rule on settlements received the highest level of agreement. While timing is seen as a problem, issues surrounding settlements were addressed the most passionately. There are actually several issues at play here which demand some close examination.

Perhaps most superficially there was the feeling that if the utilities and other parties such as the OUCC representing the consumer and any other interveners arrive

Cases settled with the OUCC should be processed in 2 – 4 weeks.



at an agreement, shouldn't the Commission generally accept it? Presumably all the parties are involved in the agreement and as such, their interests should be reasonably protected.

"When a settlement agreement is unanimous, I would encourage that the review be more deferential to the parties that have agreed to it. I can understand that if there is a term in a settlement that specifically affects someone who is not represented in the proceeding, there may be a reason to view with greater scrutiny. However, especially where there are intervenors who have actively participated, if the parties have reached a unanimous settlement, there seems to be much less need for oversight."

"Review the settlement agreements for reasonableness. Revise if in conflict with previous cases."

Of course, part of the challenge here is that the Commission itself is not party to the negotiations and thus has to start anew when presented with a settlement. And it is certainly perfectly possible that in the absence of participation, the underlying rationale and quid pro quo of an agreement may well be lost. In other words, agreements without the process may appear to inappropriately deal with issues when in fact, they are molded out of compromise. A suggestion that the Commission participate in the negotiations was quickly rebuffed. But unquestionably, the issue appears to be somewhat problematic. What is most objected to is the time it takes after a settlement is reached to reach a decision regarding it AND the tendency to meddle with some of the terms of the agreement. Consider the following comments:

"I think the tendency to redo negotiated settlements is a problem because parties have engaged in a give and take arms length negotiation process and made difficult choices only to see key terms redone yet again changing the nature and fairness of the bargain struck."

"The Commission should try to limit such modifications which play havoc with the deal that was struck...the Commission was not at the table and often cannot know the relationship of bargained terms to one another. I think it ultimately is a matter of being cautious in modifying deals and only doing so when deemed absolutely necessary in order to approve."

"The Commission has altered the deal struck in several situations by renegotiating the terms--so a utility will give something material up to obtain something it wants and the Commission will approve the settlement but cut the utility's part of the quid pro quo in half, thereby gutting the intent....the utility can either reject the settlement and start over or take the revised deal."

"The Commission's job is to review, not renegotiate. At times the Commission will modify settlements to change mechanics or future review opportunities which is far more appropriate than taking an after the fact seat at the table and redoing what had been done without the benefit of the months of negotiation that occurred."

This is clearly an issue which needs to be addressed in some way, although the recommended resolution is not clearly obvious. To a large extent the challenge is that both the points of view have some merit. The preceding comments cannot merely be

dismissed – they happen to make some sense. At the same time, the Commission unquestionably has the right and authority to review these agreements in their entirety. The solution may well lie in better communication, an issue to which we now turn.

Communications

Communication is undeniably a large topic – but nonetheless one that was frequently discussed and one which is critical to ongoing performance success of the Commission. From a broad perspective, while timing was the most often mentioned area of weakness of the current Commissions, communications was continually mentioned as a strength.

“I see communication as strength for the Commission.”

“The one thing they do fairly well is to communicate.”

Of course part of the challenge is understanding what this means, what communications are needed, where they are well exercised and where improvements are needed and can be helpful.

In general, the positive comments about the current Commission’s communication effort were broadly suggestive of more openness, interest and willingness to understand the challenges faced by utilities. This was typically a broad characterization about the Commission’s general interest and inclination to communicate. To some it meant being open to new ideas, to others it meant plant tours, to still others it meant the use of technical workshops to help everyone get up to speed. Communication is seen as a major charge and priority of the current Commission – and that is seen to be a good thing.

The positivism of such a disposition is undeniable. The more the Commission interacts with utilities, the better they understand their business. On the other hand, the more the utilities understand the priorities, stands, positions, and direction of the Commission, the better the interaction on cases will ultimately be.

From a philosophical standpoint, it certainly appears that the current Commission is positioned in precisely this fashion.

“Most IURC personnel are very accessible.”

“I think this Commission has held more technical conferences and workshops to understand issues and that is an excellent practice.”

“The Commission is accessible and welcomes informal discussions when appropriate. They are cordial, friendly and willing to listen even if they hold a contrary opinion to yours.”

And the fact is that there is a recognition that enhanced communication results in better understanding on all sides. Just as the Commission needs to improve its understanding of the utilities and their interests, the utilities need to better understand what the

Commission is looking for. This could help focus cases on the critical issues rather than a plethora of ancillary materials designed just for thoroughness and completeness rather than any other value.

“These are important, but it would be valuable to have some level of feedback as to the policy directions that the IURC would like to see adopted by companies.”

In light of this consideration, the question must be asked of how to further enhance communication. However in many cases this issue presents a conundrum. For example, the timing and ex parte communication of rate cases are a barrier to greater communication. As a barrier, they slow the process and reduce communication.

Consider the following:

- More informal communication could serve to help expedite cases
- Slow timing in rate cases inhibits communication
- Ex parte rules, while logical, may be the cause of problems with acceptance of settlement agreements with the Commission not being privy to the issues and compromises that drove the agreement.

These issues suggest several ideas regarding the further enhancement of communication efforts (and this is an issue which is additionally exacerbated by the large/small dichotomy).

First, one issue is whether the problems with settlement agreements explored earlier are simply a communication issue. That is, if the Commission merely takes the agreement, which can differ widely from the issues of the initial case, review these materials in the absence of an understanding of the compromises that drove the settlement, misunderstanding and resultant changes seem likely. Ex Parte communication rules certainly allow an informal discussion of this background prior to the Commission review and may provide important contextual data.

Secondly, if the Commission could make clearer its positions, inclinations, and policy direction prior to rate case filings, then these could be focused upon the issues which make a difference as opposed to addressing every possible issue and nuance and thereby generating enormously more materials for consideration and lengthening the timing of the case.

Third, the more informal communications which take place – the more site visits, regular discussion of business and issues and the like – the better understanding both parties will have of one another on an on-going basis. This will facilitate all formal proceedings

Finally, the more timing issues are expedited, the more time that is available for other communication efforts which can further enhance timing of cases.

In simple terms, communication between all the parties on a regular basis is a key for not only better understanding, but more timely execution of the Commission’s regulatory

duties. And while communication is unquestionably an area where the current Commission has vastly improved, there clearly is room for additional growth in this arena. Of course the biggest caution in this approach is the danger of compromising impartiality or even giving the appearance of partiality.

Of course, one of the primary challenges to the ability to communicate more and more effectively is the burden of the existing work and case load on staff. Undeniably, the encouragement of more communication efforts will simply exacerbate this work load in the short term. In part this seems a “catch 22” – communicating more would facilitate the process but the process is too burdened to communicate more at this time. This leads to another critical issue of concern and that is staffing.

Staffing

Like the communication issue which was seen as an area of improvement of the current Commission, initial comments from most of those participating in this effort involved praise regarding the staff.

“Personnel seem to be well qualified and helpful.”

“Staff is exceptional. They are honest, open, helpful, willing to learn and listen.”

“Very knowledgeable and experienced.”

“Technical staff is outstanding and very, very knowledgeable. No weaknesses to speak of.”

“The staff is great.”

These plaudits were generally widespread among respondents – although they were not without qualification. Generally, it seemed that the qualifiers were situational – how to attract and retain high quality staff to a low paying government position. These global observations are illustrated below.

“Staffing is a challenge for any Commission as it is trying to attract talent smart enough to understand difficult issues, but willing to work a government position. The Commission has done a credible job in this effort, but turnover occasionally loses capable employees.”

“Inability (probably beyond its control), to retain Commissioners, ALJs, and staff for the long term.”

“There is a lot of expertise at the Commission, despite low pay and high turnover.”

While discussion about the quality of the staff was somewhat mixed, generally speaking, the message seemed to be that quite probably the Commission as it stands at the present is understaffed. Limitation in staffing will undeniably exacerbate timing concerns. And the sense of some was that while the number of cases in front of the

Commission in the past had somewhat slowed, this should be expected to change and result in a heavier workload as the industries experience rapid change. This will further challenge the staff. And while this is no doubt centrally a budgetary issue, some respondents mentioned being willing to pay more in fees. Ultimately, this budget issue should be looked at from the perspective of consequent costs. As has been mentioned, if limited staffing lengthens the process of docketed cases, which increases their costs, which are passed on to the rate payers as well as limiting communication opportunities, which further slows the docketed case process and increases costs, allocating additional funds should have a positive financial benefit to the residents of the State.

Miscellaneous

While the foregoing represents the broad issues of concern that arose through the course of this research, there were a handful of small particulars that were mentioned by some respondents which may warrant attention.

Perhaps one of the broadest areas of concern relates to a diversity issue mentioned on several occasions by a variety of respondents. Generally, this comment was in an open ended fashion without much qualification or explanation – either observing the absence of diversity at the Commission or the need for it. Attempts to clarify the issue in the quantitative effort failed to reveal generalized concern in this arena – comments about ethnic diversity and the female representation were among the lowest rated of all the attributes. However, this does not mean this issue can be dismissed – these lower ratings are a function of two things. First, there is generally an absence of diversity among the utilities themselves which are regulated. And secondly, this isn't the Commission's biggest challenge but rather a consideration which ought to be kept in mind and addressed at some point.

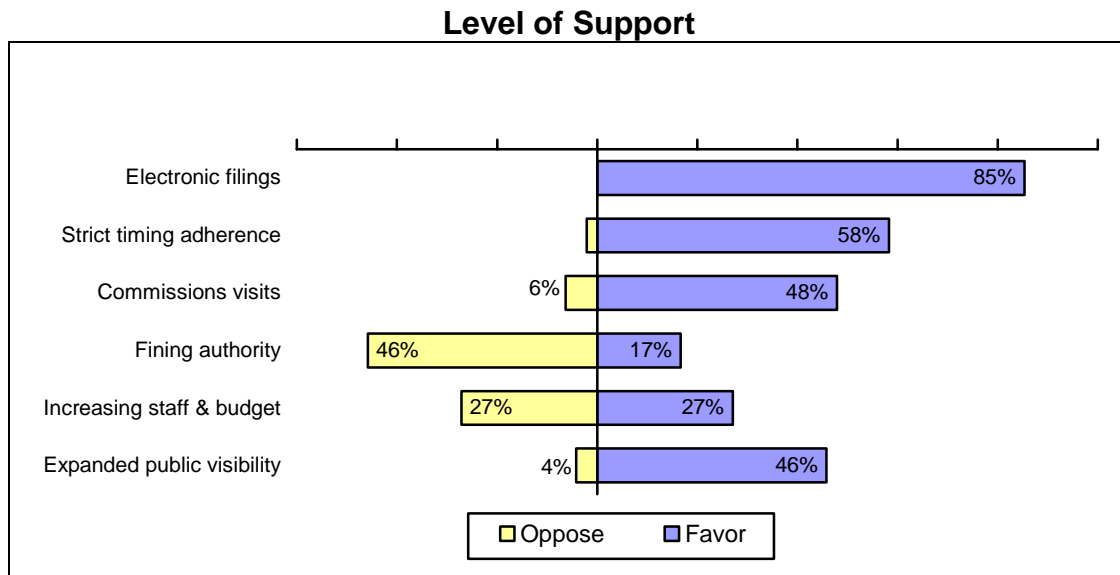
A number of specifics were also explored; some already discussed in detail, while others not addressed at all. In the quantitative phase, those surveyed were asked whether they favored or opposed some of the specific issues that had been raised in earlier qualitative phases of this research. The results provide direction and even clear consensus in some areas.

First, unqualifiedly, electronic filing is something that is desired by nearly everyone and opposed by no one. This would appear to represent something of a mandate to pursue this alternative filing mechanism.

Consistent with the earlier discussion regarding timing, more strict adherence to timing requirements has little opposition and strong support. The findings are similar for encouraging regular Commission visits to utilities and other constituents. An almost identical finding was revealed for expanding the visibility with the public to build understanding.

The idea of giving the Commission fining authority was, perhaps not surprisingly, ill

received. The recommendation regarding increasing the staff and budget of the Commissions received a neutral response. This is not inconsistent with the comments throughout the research about staffing – in part; this is a function of those responding more often than not have insufficient data to express an opinion on staffing levels. Those willing to do so were generally drawing conclusions from the staffing levels and timeliness of other Commissions with which they deal.



In addition to these quantified concerns, a number of specific issues were raised from a limited number of respondents.

- There was concern expressed about the reorganization of the ALJ's and general counsel. A number of mentions felt this was inappropriate. Minimally, the Commission needs to better communicate the rationale and support for having made this change.
- Use of email communications instead of faxes to improve communications and timeliness.
- Continual improvements of website – with such tools as a master list of pending cases and navigation improvements rather than reliance of case numbers.
- Allow for electronic participation in hearings.

Public Visibility

It was mentioned by several of those participating that the public needs to have a better understanding of the Commission, its role and function. The fact that the Commission is changed with balancing the interests of the utilities **and** the public, yet the public could not be meaningfully surveyed, is an important example of the challenge. While mentioned, it is difficult to assess the importance of this concern – given that for the most part the public was not invited to participate in this process.

However, it is important that the Commission remain sensitive to this issue insofar as they are protectors of the public interest. And simply doing so through the representatives of the public such as the OUCC and through public hearings is perhaps, to some degree, insufficient. Consideration might be given to ways to communicate with the general public in less formal settings to obtain input from this important sector.

Of course, one aspect of the Commission's function which received surprisingly little discussion was the Consumer Affairs division. In part, this seemed to be the result of good consistent performance on a regular basis. Not that this area was completely free of criticism – some respondents had problems and think that there could be better communication and timeliness (to repeat a theme seen here). But for the most part this point of connectivity seems to function well and serve a valuable purpose.

At the same time, the fact that Consumer Affairs does have regular contact with the general public (albeit a skewed segment thereof) a similar investigation into their performance with customers ought to be pursued in a rigorous, quantitative fashion to assess this important audience as well.

Conclusions & Recommendations

As was noted at the outset, the focus of this research was exceedingly broad, the population narrow, and the exploration deep. The general goal was to evaluate the Commission and its most recent performance and to make recommendations to improve.

Broadly speaking, the recent performance of the Commission received good reviews. They were applauded for enhancing communication efforts, openness and willingness and interest in visiting utilities. The public face of the Commission has been widely regarded as well. And what has generally been viewed as having a greater interest in economic development and being more business friendly was generally well received. Although the other side of this coin is a segment of those interviewed who simply regard the Commission as a political arm of the Governor promoting his agenda.

Despite all the plaudits there were significant problems and opportunities identified. The primary issues were:

- Timing of orders
- Handling of settlement agreements
- Communication of stands/positions

Nearly all the issues that were discussed centered upon these three topics. While detailed discussions have been forwarded in the body of this report, in brief review the following would be forwarded as possible changes for the Commission:

1. Increase communication efforts whenever and wherever possible. Have more site visits, get staff out of the office, have more informal meetings, regularly meet with utilities and other constituencies, be open about the Commission's agenda and views and criteria, and so forth.
2. Focus upon the timing of orders – whether this means strict adherence to schedules, disallowing delays, or simply making it a priority. Serious consideration to process mapping all the Commission functions may well help lead to identifying efficiencies and redundancies.
3. Make efforts to better communicate in the cases of settlement agreements. Whether this means sitting with all the parties prior to reviewing the agreement or incorporating settlement issues in the agreement, this is clearly an area of concern to all utilities.
4. Provide a better mechanism for smaller utilities to engage in cases without undue pressure on their more limited resources.
5. Consider budget increases and additional staff to help with timeliness and communication efforts.
6. Implement electronic filing.

Appendix

Executive Interview Outline

IURC One-on-One Interview Outline

Initial Qualitative Exploration

August 2007

I. Introduction

Purpose: To introduce participants to what to expect from the interview and to set the stage for the questions to follow.

First, I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in our interview today. The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission is interested in exploring how it can improve as an organization in all its interactions with its stakeholders. In order to do so, as an initial step interviews are being conducted to help better understand some of the relationships, interactions, and identify opportunities for improvement. The key topics I would like to discuss with you today include:

- Your overall feelings about the IURC and its effectiveness;
- The specific touch points you have with the commission;
- Specific strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement that you see for the Commission;
- Ways in which you think your relationship with the commission could improve;
- Any concerns you have and issues you feel should be addressed.

Let's start by talking a little about your role within your organization and what kind of interaction you have with the IURC.

PROBE AS NEEDED:

- What types of Commission issues are you involved with
 - Rate cases
 - Commission complaints and customer service issues
 - Regular fuel cost adjustment petitions
 - Inter-utility activities like mergers and territory issues
- How frequently are you personally involved with the commission?
- What forums does your involvement typically take place.
 - Hearings
 - Developing and/or reviewing filings
 - Informational and administrative communications
 - Other?

II. Overall Assessment

Purpose: To identify the overall attitudes towards the commission prior to a review of detailed strengths and weakness and to provide a context for further discussion and exploration.

Let's talk a little about your overall attitude towards the Commission and the job it does.

- If you were to evaluate them overall, what would your assessment be?
- What is it you think they do best?
- What is the commission's biggest weakness?
- What should and should not be changed?

An organization like the IURC has a clearly defined role and its processes are highly structure and regulated and these things can't change substantially. Still, it can be helpful to think of its performance with respect to specific attributes and issues. Talk a little about how you would evaluation the IURC on the following measures.

- Timeliness
- Fairness
- Responsiveness
- Thoroughness
- Accessibility
- Openness
- Personnel

For each of the above, probe for specific examples to provide a good understanding of these attribute assessments

III. Specific Assessments

Purpose: To focus upon individual performance areas and review them in detail to identify some smaller opportunities for improvement.

Let's focus our discussion on some of the specific efforts and processes of the commission and see what thoughts and reactions you have.

- Hearings
 - a. Pre-hearings
 - b. Public Field Hearings
 - c. Evidentiary or Settlement hearings
 - d. Other hearings
- Meetings
 - a. Technical Workshops
 - b. Attorney conference
 - c. Utility forums
 - d. Other
- Communications
- Personnel
 - a. Commissioners
 - b. Administrative Law Judges
 - c. Technical staff
 - d. Consumer affairs
 - e. External Affairs

For each of the above, probe for specific examples to provide a good understanding of these attribute assessments

IV. Ideal Relationship

Purpose: Having discussed in detail the commission and its functioning strengths and weaknesses, the final section focuses upon what changes are needed couched in terms of an ideal relationship

The last issues to discuss centers upon what changes, if any, you think should be pursued which might better approximate the ideal.

- Which things should be changed?
 - a. Why should they?
 - b. How should they?
- Which things should be left unchanged?
- What single recommendation would you like to forward to the Commission?

V. Closing

Purpose: This final component provides the opportunity to bring the discussion to a close by addressing any follow-up questions or interests generated during the interview.

- Do you have anything further to add to our discussion today?
- Thank you for participation

Quantitative Assessment Questionnaire

Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission 2007 Performance Assessment Executive Questionnaire

Thank you for taking time to participate in our survey today. Over the last several months the IURC has been taking a close look at its activities and performance through the eyes of organizations and individuals with which it interacts. You may have been contacted already for information, but please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Please be assured that your individual survey responses will be kept confidential. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

The first set of questions seeks your opinions regarding the IURC's overall performance.

1. Overall, taking everything into consideration, how would you rate the performance of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission in the last few years?

Low	Moderate				High	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Would you say that the performance of the Commission in the last few years is better, the same or worse than in the past?

- ☐ better
☐ the same
☐ worse

3. Please rate the IURC on the following specific attributes.

	Low	Moderate				High	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[] Fairness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[] Thoroughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[] Timeliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[] Personnel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[] Communications	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[] Impartiality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please help us understand your level of experience with the Commission.

4. Which of the following represent Commission issues in which you are directly involved? Please select all that apply.

5.

- ☐ Rate cases
☐ Commission complaints and customer service issues
☐ Regular fuel cost adjustment petitions
☐ Inter-utility activities like mergers and territory issues
☐ Utility forums
☐ Dispute resolutions
☐ Attorney conferences
☐ Technical workshops
☐ Developing and/or reviewing filings
☐ Informational and administrative communications
☐ Other (Please Specify _____)

6. Approximately how often do you deal with issues directly relating to the work of the Commission?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☐ Annually
- ☐ Less than once a year

7. About how long have you been directly involved with Commission related activities?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ One to two years
- ☐ Two to three years
- ☐ Three to five years
- ☐ Five to ten years
- ☐ More than ten years

Think for a moment about your most recent significant Commission involvement and evaluate your experience.

8. What was your most recent significant Commission involvement?

[_____]

9. How recent was this involvement?

- ☐ Within the last month
- ☐ Within the last two to three months
- ☐ Six months to a year ago
- ☐ In the last year or two
- ☐ More than two years ago

10. Overall, how satisfied were you with the way in which it was handled?

- ☐ Completely satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

11. Why do you feel this way?

[_____]

12. Overall, how satisfied were you with the amount of time it took to resolve or finalize this issue?

- ☐ Completely satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

13. The following is a list of statements which some people have used to describe their feelings about the IURC. For each of these please indicate how much you agree or disagree that the statement describes the Commission using a 7-point agreement scale where the higher the number the more you agree.

The most significant weakness of the Commission is a lack of ethnic diversity	_____
Commissioners are more accessible than they used to be	_____
There is a high level of staff turnover	_____
The Commission does a good job of understanding complex regulatory policy issues	_____
The Commission has a bias toward larger utilities	_____
I think the Commission does its best to be fair to all parties involved in its cases	_____
Delays in docketed cases are most often caused by parties other than the Commission	_____
There may be too few staff members to handle all the work of the Commission	_____
Cases settled with the OUCC should be processed with an order in 2-4 weeks	_____
The problem with the length of cases is that it costs more money	_____
The Commission does a good job handling customer complaints	_____
Consumers should have a better understanding of how rates are regulated by the Commission	_____
The biggest problem with delays in obtaining rate increases is the costs incurred by utilities	_____
The IURC needs to better understand new technologies and their impact	_____
More female representation is needed on the Commission	_____
The Commission should provide clear guidelines to facilitate cases and settlements	_____
Orders need to be made in a timelier basis	_____
Many rulings take too long	_____
The Commission is open to new ideas	_____
Regulatory lag is the biggest weakness of the Commission	_____
The Commission isn't sensitive enough to the challenges of smaller utilities	_____

14. Some specific recommendations have been suggested by others that have been interviewed. For each of these please indicate whether you favor the change, oppose the change, or if you are neutral in your position.

	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Favor</u>
Electronic filings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strict adherence to timing requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular Commission visits to utilities and other constituents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fining authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing the staff and budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expanded visibility with the public to build understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The purpose of this research is to examine how the Commission can be improved. In that spirit...

15. What should be changed at the Commission?
[_____]
16. What should be left unchanged at the Commission?
[_____]
17. What single recommendation would you like to forward to the Commission?
[_____]

Thank you very much with your help in this important survey. Your opinions are very valuable to us. Your comments, and those of others, will be summarized in a report evaluating IURC performance.

Verbatim Responses

Satisfaction	Q10 - Why do you feel this way? (Based on overall satisfaction rating)
Completely satisfied	IURC provided excellent advice, support and assistance.
Completely satisfied	Commissioners and staff were attentive and asked insightful questions.
Completely satisfied	Routine.
Completely satisfied	Open Communication
Completely satisfied	...would save ratepayer money in the long run. All of this was well digested by the parties, respective staffs, and parties resulting in a reasonable settlement for all concerned. This would not have occurred but for the IURC's knowledgeable, expertise and consistently moving the case toward a timely conclusion.
Completely satisfied	I thought the process was fair and comprehensive.
Completely satisfied	I thought it was a very timely activity with a lot of good give and take.
Completely satisfied	I have had frequent, open, and candid discussions with the Executives at the Commission that produce equitable results. These interactions have been respectful and cooperative.
Very satisfied	IURC staff and commission acted fairly and expeditiously.
Very satisfied	The IURC acted quickly and issued its Order on a timely basis.
Very satisfied	The hearings were conducted fairly and efficiently.
Very satisfied	It has been handled in a true collaborative manner and was relatively efficiently run.
Very satisfied	Reasonable, fact-based decision.
Very satisfied	Everything was handled professionally, timely and impartially.
Very satisfied	Well reasoned order with reasonable and balanced outcome. Would have been higher, but the timing was somewhat slower than expected.
Very satisfied	Commission acted on a settlement fairly quickly.
Very satisfied	The outcome was reasonable and supported policy goals that were balanced in nature.
Very satisfied	Good impartial source of information
Very satisfied	Some issues still remain unresolved but IURC staff is doing a great job
Very satisfied	Commission staff handled filing concerns in a reasonable manner.
Very satisfied	The ALJs and staff have been very thorough and responsive. This has been very helpful to resolving tough issues.
Very satisfied	Hearing was conducted professionally and impartially.
Very satisfied	Approval of settlement agreement in a fully-settled case could have come sooner.
Somewhat satisfied	The satisfaction level reflects a blending of the satisfaction level I have for the multiple cases pending before the Commission. Some of those cases are one in which I've been completely or very satisfied and in others not so satisfied.
Somewhat satisfied	Surprised that they asked for our feedback.

Satisfaction	Q10 - Why do you feel this way? (Based on overall satisfaction rating)	(Continued)
Somewhat satisfied	I am not aware of the follow up by IURC.	
Somewhat satisfied	It is difficult to get organized with the hearing room unavailable until just before the scheduled hearing time. This forces organization and discussions to take place in the public hallway.	
Somewhat satisfied	The process took a long time.	
Somewhat satisfied	Practical decision that did not overly burden any party	
Somewhat dissatisfied	Learning on both sides of the table was needed	
Somewhat dissatisfied	Lack of communications from staff	
Somewhat dissatisfied	The amount of time it took and the lack of understanding of issues by staff.	
Very dissatisfied	The way it was handled soared the cost of the case and bond issue in excess...	
Very dissatisfied	Guidelines for 30 day filings need to be changed to prevent arbitrary dismissal	

Q14 - What should be changed at the Commission?

More diversity
IURC Runs well as currently structured.
Add electronic filing (See Illinois Commerce Comm) Undo the consolidation of legal resources.
Sometimes the OUCC seems to be engaged in issues more of an academic interest than practical relevance.
Place a statutory deadline on the issuance of a rate order in a rate case. Allow for electronic filings of rate cases and other case information.
Modalities that will lead to more career staff, ALJs, and Commissioners.
(1) With the recent increases in salaries, now approaching private sector levels, there should be a concomitant expectation that employees increase their productivity. The solution to timeliness in orders is not bigger budgets and more employees, but demanding more from those already on the payroll. That's how the private sector works. (2) Stay focused on what's important. Not everything is important.
Better communication with the companies.
A stronger challenge to the OUCC in their lack of knowledge in the water industry
Greater sensitivity to the length of time for the issuance of orders.
Settlements should result in expedited orders compared to litigated proceedings. The Commission needs more staff members in certain areas, especially ALJs. The Commission is getting more professional and competent every day, so please keep it up.
We should be careful about changing a pretty well functioning organization.
Continue to add opportunities to access and complete information over the internet - Forms, notices, filings, etc.
Attitude and communications
Overall, I think the Commission is well set up and run in a reasonable manner by talented people. I'm sure, as in all organizations, that changes will be required as the needs of Hoosiers change. However, I can't really point to any one single thing that I can definitively say THAT should be changed. Instead I'll point out one thing that needed changed that is now much better. The parking situation at the Indiana Government Center South is awful. Now that the IURC has moved to easy walking distance to downtown, parking for visitors is much easier.
Change the current restricted access to IURC public records, public hearing rooms, and personnel to at least include those professionals such as accountants, engineers and attorneys that regularly interact with the IURC. As an example, identification cards to be used to authorize access to public record areas. All hearing rooms could be unlocked 30 minutes before any proceeding. An updated and circulated telephone list for personnel could be published.
It is imperative to implement electronic filing with the IURC.
No recommendation
It doesn't need any significant changes
Because of how smaller and municipal utilities are treated, a strong desire to remove themselves from jurisdiction exists.
My only criticism of the Commission's work is that at times it takes too long. I would support guidelines that state that certain cases, depending on the level of complexity, be adjudicated within a set amount of time.
More sanctity of settlements reached with OUCC. More Commissioner independence in voting.
A quicker turn around time in rate cases and emergency gas cost adjustments.
Either accept or reject settlement agreements
Increase staff so that matters before the Commission can be handled in a timely manner. This would include strict filing requirements for utilities and deadlines for Commission response.
More diversity is needed at all levels in the Commission. Implement electronic filing.
Reduce time for orders on settled cases. Use future test year to respond to regulatory lag issue.

Q15 - What should be left unchanged at the Commission?

Staff numbers
IURC runs well as currently structured.
No new mandatory timeframes, other than for decisions on settled cases.
The staff's general availability to field questions and serve as a resource for the public, utilities and counsel to better understand Commission policies, practices and preferences.
Most everything should be left as is, structurally.
The currently prevalent attitude to be more open to new technology, theory, and legal approaches to evolving utility problems and issues.
The telecom rules.
The commissioners
Most everything. The reorganization over the last couple of years is bearing fruit.
Its willingness to change
I think the openness that the IURC and Commission Staff have worked towards in the last several years is a welcome change. I recall a time many years ago when things were different and a lot of egos (on both sides) got in the way of the work of the utilities and the Commission. I think this has vastly improved to the benefit of customers.
No recommendation
It doesn't need any significant changes
Everything else.
The commission has a good staff and has done a good job
The willingness to discuss matters that do not constitute ex parte
Staff willingness to communicate with parties.

Q16 - What single recommendation would you like to forward to the Commission?

Be more open
Present more information to the public about what you do.
Keeping the general counsel or some other attorney not covered by ex parte rules separate from the ALJs who are necessarily covered by those rules. Having the ability to communicate about a legal matter with someone at the Commission without compromising the adjudication of a pending case is a valuable tool for the practicing bar.
Invite comment and input from industry experts to educate staff and commissioners and enable them to make the most enlightened decisions possible. Identify areas of challenge, including technical and financial, and work collectively to raise and resolve issues.
As noted earlier, a statutory deadline on issuing an Order in a rate case.
A periodic news letter may be helpful in explaining rate setting complexities and the reasons for those to the public.
Keep working on issuing orders in a timely fashion.
Better understanding of water utilities and expedite response
Timeliness of the issuance of orders should be improved.
Encourage settlements by issuing order sooner than would occur in a fully litigated proceeding.
It is time to move to electronic filing, and do away with the paper filings.
Be more in touch with the utilities you regulate
Keep up the good work.
Improved access
Electronic filing must be made available as soon as possible. The IURC is woefully lacking in this area. It is light years behind other PUCs.
Remain open to new ideas; do not become an advocate during the course of the hearings but remain an impartial observer.
When provided something less than black letter law as guidance dare to interpret boldly and innovatively, using a reasonableness standard, as opposed to reliance on 'the way it's always been done'.
Accept stipulations.
My prior recommendation regarding timing of orders.
The commission should regulate all private and municipal utility rates in the state
Pay more attention to the settlements reached with the OUCC.
Simplify filings.
Accept without modification settlement agreements among all parties to an issue
Keep striving for improvement! This survey is a step in the right direction if the suggestions are heeded and change comes out of it.
Move to future test year approach.